



Governor's Renewable Energy Policy Conference
Siting and Permitting Large-Scale Projects in the California Desert and Beyond
March 24, 2010 - UC Riverside, Highlander Union Building (HUB)

A Policy Primer for the Afternoon Breakout Sessions

To assist in framing the conversations that will take place during the 10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. breakout sessions, each panel's moderator has written a brief overview of the panel topic. These policy papers and the corresponding three questions will guide breakout discussions between panelists and session attendees as well as the report back to the larger conference audience.

Breakout Session 2 - Prosperity & Opportunity: How will these projects affect my community?

Moderator: Peter Weiner, Attorney, Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker. Panelists: Brad Mitzelfelt, San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors; John Means, CCCAOE Central Regional Vice-President, Kern Community College District; Darren Bouton, First Solar; Richard Sierra, Business Manager, Laborers International Union of North America, Local 783

Renewable energy development provides significant potential for new jobs and the economic revitalization of California. There is great opportunity to both employ skilled workers who are now available and to educate a new workforce to support renewable energy needs in the future. Renewable energy projects could also impact local community services, and acquisition of private land for public purposes (such as habitat preservation) could remove developable land from the tax rolls.

The manufacturing of solar and wind project materials is currently performed outside localities where the projects may be built. There are both construction and operational jobs connected to renewable energy facilities and communities can benefit if the local workforce has the skills to do these jobs. By cooperating to maximize training, communities and renewable energy companies can maximize job benefits for the local community.

Renewable energy jobs also create other jobs in the community. Large scale solar, for example, demands lots of glass and mirrors. How do we organize to capture these other related sources of wealth and prosperity in our communities? Entrepreneurs, local economic developers and the state must work together to ensure that economic drivers positively affect the way of life in rural communities.

Just as environmental advocates have feared the "paving of the desert" by renewable energy projects, so some community leaders have expressed concern regarding the impact of projects on fire, police and other services. They have also questioned the acquisition of private land for public purposes, such as species protection, because of a perceived negative impact on the local tax base that otherwise might be assisted by commercial development. These issues need to be discussed and addressed as planning and projects move forward.

The *Prosperity and Opportunity* Panel will discuss the following three questions:

- **How can renewable energy projects assist the current workforce in local communities? What skill sets are needed for the construction and operation of renewable energy projects? How many jobs are at issue? What kind? Can jobs be kept in the community, or will they go to people outside who have unique skills?**
- **How can renewable energy projects create an economic multiplier effect? How do jobs revitalize communities?**
- **Is there a downside to renewable energy development in terms of tax base, impact on services, or removal of developable land from the tax rolls? How can renewable energy developers work with local and state government to minimize or avoid these impacts?**